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The President's Daily Brief

March 3, 1975

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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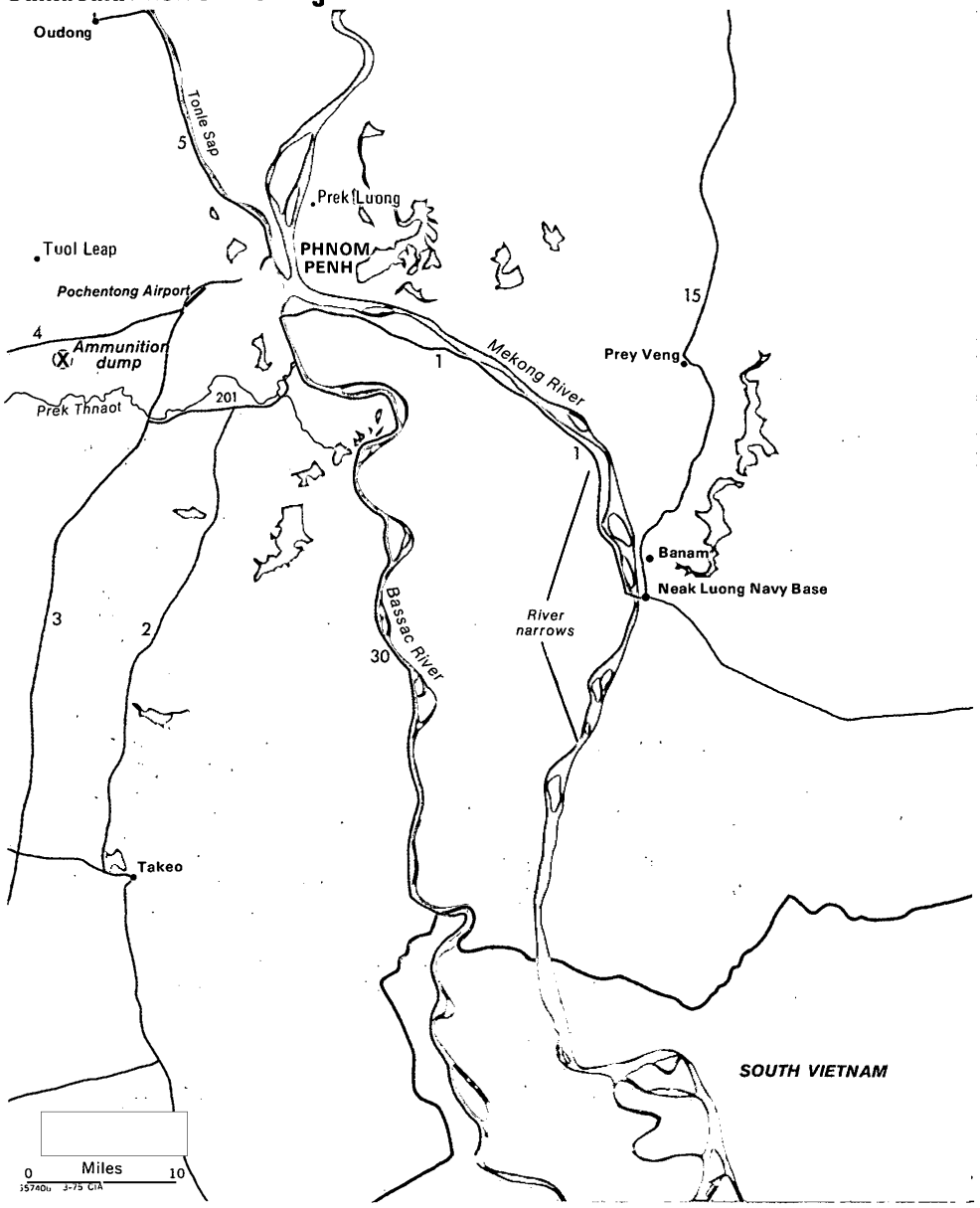
Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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CAMBODIA

Heavy fighting continues along the western approaches to Phnom Penh. Government forces that are attempting to retake Tuol Leap have encountered stiff resistance from a large, well-equipped communist force. The airfield at Pochentong continues under rocket attack.

Southwest of Phnom Penh, government reinforcements have reached a unit of the 3rd Division which had been encircled and under heavy pressure since last week. Operations to link up with another cut-off position have been suspended, but are scheduled to resume tomorrow. The relief of these positions should free some units of the 3rd Division for operations against communist units to the north of Route 4.

Communist attacks are expected to continue northeast of the capital. A naval resupply convoy reached two government posts in the area last night and replenished dwindling ammunition stocks.

Along the Mekong, communist attacks continue against Neak Luong and Banam. Government forces are continuing clearing operations on an island just north of Neak Luong but reportedly have abandoned a position to the southeast. This loss could hinder efforts to reinforce the remaining government position near the southern narrows, which has come under intensified enemy attack over the past few days.

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NOTES

Ethiopia's *ruling military council has adopted a more favorable attitude toward Sudanese President Numayri's peace proposal for Eritrea.*

An authoritative Ethiopian source told a US embassy officer Friday that a government delegation will leave soon for Khartoum apparently to hold discussions with rebel representatives there. Prospects for productive negotiations, however, remain slim. The Ethiopians continue to insist that discussions must be within the framework of Ethiopian national unity. The rebels, for their part, continue to demand that the government first recognize Eritrea's right to independence before negotiations begin.

* * *

Clashes in several cities in southern Lebanon *between army units and leftist and fedayeen forces continued over the weekend. A general strike called to protest the army's intervention has paralyzed the ports of Sidon and Tyre.*

A demonstration in Sidon last week over fishing rights, which started the trouble, may have been a ruse by radical fedayeen and leftists to draw the army into conflict with the commandos and thereby embarrass the leadership of the more moderate Palestine Liberation Organization in its relations with the Lebanese government. Prime Minister Sulh has been consulting [redacted] with PLO leaders and with Lebanese Socialist leader Jumblatt in the hope that they will be able to restrain the radicals. Both PLO leaders and Jumblatt will move carefully, however, lest they be identified with the government's position and alienate their generally anti-government supporters. 25X1

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West Berlin's *Christian Democrats, whose candidate for mayor was kidnaped by terrorists last week, won a plurality of 44 percent in yesterday's election, but the Social Democrats may still be able to control the city's government.*

Peter Lorenz, the Christian Democrats' mayoral candidate, is still captive and no new government will be formed until after negotiations with his abductors. Social Democratic Mayor Schuetz hopes to stay in power by forming a coalition with the Free Democrats. Together the two parties would have a ten-seat edge in the city's House of Representatives. Voter sympathy for Lorenz figured in the Social Democrats' setback, and Christian Democratic use of the law-and-order issue may hurt them seriously in four other state elections this spring.

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